



The first parade of the Carnival 53 season sets the night alight

Torches in hand, the revelers that took part in the *Fakkel Optocht* or “Torch Parade” marched from the Entertainment center in Dakota through the town of Oranjestad, setting the streets aglow with torches and various lights that accented their costumes. The Fakkel Optocht is the first of many parades that will take place until the final Grande Parade of Oranjestad on February 19.

L.G. Smith Boulevard was lined with spectators happy to welcome the carnival season, an excellent excuse to party on and enjoy the music that will set anyone’s feet to moving. Nearly every band worth its salt was on a truck so the various pirates, caballeros, doctors, nurses and jesters could dance down the street to the carnival beat. Of note was the new group OPC or OREO Posse Carnival, from Aruba’s top entertainer, Claudius Phillips, better known during the Carnival season as “Mighty Talent.” A multiple winner of the Calypso and Roadmarch King crown, Mighty Talent organized this year a group of his own after years of providing the rhythm for other carnival groups, and he had many enthusiastic participants. They certainly deserved the award for the most innovative tee shirts!

Carnival 53 is well and truly here after this busy past weekend, and it will be a very busy five weeks until the final parade as queen contests, numerous parades and other lively events fill the calendar.